

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L USNATO 2445

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, NATO, NAC
SUBJECT: NATO SUMMIT -- PRESIDENTIAL PRESS CONFERENCE
REF: USNATO 1801 (C) OF MARCH 29, 1977

1. THE IMPACT IN THE US AND EUROPE OF THE PRESIDENT'S PARTICIPATION IN THE NATO SUMMIT WILL BE LESS IF HE DOES NOT MEET THE PRESS FOLLOWING THE MAY 10 SESSION. SINCE ALL EYES WILL BE ON THE PRESIDENT, AS THE PRINCIPAL WESTERN LEADER, WE RECOMMEND THAT HE HOLD AN OPEN PRESS CONFERENCE TO UNDERLINE THE US COMMITMENT TO NATO AND TO STRESS THE IMPORTANCE WE ATTACH TO STRENGTHENING THE ALLIANCE.

2. WE EARLIER RECOMMENDED (REFTEL) THAT PLANNING FOR THE PRESIDENT'S PARTICIPATION IN THE NATO SUMMIT CONCENTRATE ON THE PUBLIC SIGNIFICANCE OF THE EVENT AND THAT THE PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT TO THE NAC BE DESIGNED FOR PUBLIC RELEASE AS A MAJOR NEWS ITEM FOR MAY 10. BUT, PUBLIC RELEASE OF THE PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT CANNOT SUBSTITUTE FOR THE STRONG IMPACT THAT AN OPEN PRESS CONFERENCE WOULD MAKE.

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3. DURING AND AFTER BOTH DAYS OF THE NATO MEETING, OFFICIALS OF ALL ALLIED COUNTRIES WILL BRIEF AT VARIOUS LEVELS, AND WE ALSO EXPECT MEETINGS BETWEEN MOST HEADS OF GOVERNMENT AND THE PRESS. THEY WILL INEVITABLY TOUCH UPON THE PRESIDENT'S REMARKS TO NATO, LIKELY GIVING THEIR OWN REACTIONS. THUS, IT WILL BE IMPORTANT THAT THE PRESIDENT HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK FOR HIMSELF. OTHERWISE, WE HAZARD LEAVING A CLEAR FIELD TO OTHERS TO INTERPRET THE RESULTS OF THE DISCUSSIONS AMONG HEADS OF GOVERNMENTS AND THE PRESIDENT'S BILATERAL MEETINGS.

4. WE SUGGEST AS A FORMAT FOR THE PRESS CONFERENCE AN OPENING PRESENTATION BY THE PRESIDENT OF ABOUT 10 MINUTES, FOLLOWED BY 20 MINUTES OF QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

5. WHILE THE PRESIDENT'S SCHEDULE WOULD MAKE IT DIFFICULT FOR HIM TO HOLD THE CONFERENCE BEFORE THE CONCLUSION OF THE BILATERALS ON MAY 10, IT MIGHT BE SCHEDULED IMMEDIATELY PRIOR TO HIS DEPARTURE FROM LONDON. A POSSIBLE SITE WOULD BE THE BANQUETING HALL, WHICH WILL ACCOMMODATE ABOUT 500 JOURNALISTS, HAS SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION FACILITIES (ENGLISH AND FRENCH) AND IS WIRED FOR RADIO AND TV.
STREATOR

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